



Monetary Obligations Of Lighting + Tzedakah

Giving On Chanukah [#67]

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Today we're going to be speaking about the obligation to light Chanukah candles. Who is that obligation on? Is it on men or women as well? Are poor people exempt from the mitzvah of lighting Chanukah candles if they don't have so much money? As well, how many would a person light for the *hidur*?

The first *sefer* we're using is called the *Kitzur Halachos of Chanukah and Purim*, by Rav Zev Hofstedter, based on the *psakim* of the *Mishnah Brurah*. He says over here that the base obligation is upon all Jewish people, men and women alike. Women are not *patur* from this mitzvah, even if it is a mitzvah *shehazman grama*. Because women were included in the miracle, they are part of the mitzvah and *mechuyav* and obligated in the mitzvah as well.

He does bring over here that the base halacha is that one candle needs to be lit for the whole house for each night. Meaning, one candle on the first night, one candle on the second night, as well as the third and fourth all the way until the eighth night. Each night, the base halacha is that one single candle be lit for everybody in the house. That which we light more candles is a *hidur*, is a beautification of the mitzvah, but it is not the base halacha of what is strictly required according to the halacha.

He brings over here that a person who does not have money, not even enough for one candle, is obligated to go and beg for money or even sell his few possessions that he has in order to fulfill the mitzvah. Even though normally we don't say that a person has to do something like this, like not spending more than 1/5 of their money for a mitzvah, and especially to take charity, in this case it's different in regards to *pirsumei nisa*, of spreading the miracle of what happened.

He says over here that a person who has limited funds should purchase his Chanukah candles before he even buys wine for *Kidush* and *Havdalah* on Shabbos. However, it would not come before buying candles

for Shabbos.

There is more of an *inyan* to give tzedakah to poor people on Chanukah as well. It's brought in the *Mishnah Brurah*, it's also brought in the *sefer* over here, by Rabbi Shimon Taub, called *The Laws of Tzedakah and Maaser*. He says, one should make an extra effort to increase his contributions of tzedakah money during the Holiday of Chanukah. It's brought over here, in the *Ahavat Shalom Luach*, that one of things it does, is it actually fixes blemishes of the *neshamah*, specifically through giving this tzedakah on Chanukah. He says, the best is to give it to people who are learning Torah and who are impoverished and do not have so much money, to strengthen them as well. So there is an added *inyan* of giving more tzedakah on Chanukah as well.

Getting back to the mitzvah. We said that the base halacha is to light one candle each night for the whole household. There is a difference between Sefardim and Ashkenazim. When you want to get a little bit better and do a *hidur* in the mitzvah, so according to Sefardim, you will still only light one menorah for everyone in the house. The *hidur* of adding another light per night, meaning, on the second night lighting two, on the third night lighting three lights, everyone agrees that's a *hidur*, whether you're a Sefardi or an Ashkenazi. But for Sefardim, you're only going to do that with one single menorah. However, according to the Ashkenazim, their minhag, their custom is that each person in the house will have their own menorah and light that amount of lights as well. That's the difference between Sefardim and Ashkenazim.

*Please note that these halachos are intended to inform and educate the reader/listener in general. For any specific questions which arise, it is recommended to speak over the exact case with a competent halachic authority in order to assess the halacha accordingly. You can send your questions in to us as well by replying via WhatsApp to our halacha Q & A number on the group, sending an email to Ask@MoneyHalacha.com, or via our contact page at MoneyHalacha.com/contact-us

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